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Event data recorders used in NHTSA study of Toyotas have history of problems

Similarly, in a Q&A on its Web site, posted before the furor erupted over sudden acceleration problems, Toyota expressed doubts about its ability to accurately read the data from the recorders. The tool for reading the data has not been "scientifically validated," the company has said. "At this time, Toyota does not have confidence that the readout reports it generates are accurate," it added.

Moreover, even if a device is recording properly, misfiring engine electronics could feed it false information, critics said.

"The event data recorder is not an independent witness. It is a blind witness that records only what is whispered by the faulty engine electronics," said Donald Slavik, a Milwaukee-based attorney representing plaintiffs in four cases of alleged unintended acceleration.

Toyota has been reluctant to reveal the contents of the crash data recorders, which some have used in lawsuits against the company. The family of the driver of the Toyota Tundra that struck the oak in Washington state

Toyota Tundra that struck the oak in Washington state repeatedly asked the automaker to provide a reading from the data recorder, but Toyota refused. It wasn't until Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) pressed the company in hearings in March that Toyota offered to read the data.

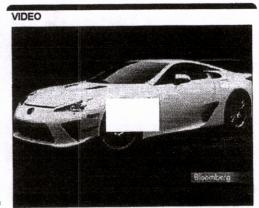
"So I want to know: Can you provide that information to Mr. Eves's family, so that they can have this data and information?" she pressed Toyota executives at the hearing.

The next month, the company did so. But the results did not clarify what had happened to the young driver, Christopher Eves.

The data readout "was implausible," said Ron Eves, the driver's father. "It was almost contemptuous. . . . They just said, 'We have completed the download' -- end of story."

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Toyota Making Renewed Push Into Sports Car Market: Video

Aug. 19 (Bloomberg) -- Bloomberg's Mike Firn reports on Toyota Motor Corp.'s renewed push into sports cars. As the world's largest carmaker tries to rebuild its reputation for quality following record recalls, President Akio Toyoda, a racing fan, has said he wants to add more fun to his cars. Under Toyoda, who became president in June 2009, the company has taken orders for the Lexus LFA \$375,000 supercar, is readying an "affordable" rear-wheel drive coupe and may even add a sporty version of the Prius. Bloomberg's Phillip Yin also speaks. (Source: Bloomberg)

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